

ENVELOPE SERIES

(QUARTERLY)

VOL. XI

OCTOBER, 1908

No. 3

THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Reasons for Faith in
Christianity as the
Universal Religion

BY

REV. RAYMOND CALKINS, D. D.

American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions, Boston, Mass.

Annual Subscription, Ten Cents

Foreword.

We present to our readers in this number of the Envelope Series an article of rare value. It needs only to be read in order to be appreciated. When it is once read we venture the opinion that it will be treasured up as one of those treatises which a man wants to have at hand for future reference. This is a candid, thorough-going and fundamental discussion of the most vital theme connected with Christian missions, viz.—Have we a universal gospel? Indeed the theme is as vital to our work at home as to the foreign missionary enterprise. We might as well frankly recognize the fact that there are not a few among us, in our churches and out, who seriously and honestly question whether we are bound to give the Christian religion to the whole world, whether the oriental races need the religious ideas which we profess in America. Every pastor knows how many there are who feel that way even if they do not openly express a doubt on the subject.

Now it is exactly for such people that Dr. Calkins, at our request, writes this article. He faces the question sympathetically and honestly, and his conclusions should carry weight with all sincere inquirers. We bespeak for his words a wide reading, and we shall be surprised if some of our missionaries in Japan, China and India do not ask for copies to place in the hands of intelligent inquirers.

Sad to relate, under the government rules for second class matter, we are obliged to drop 1,500 subscribers who have not renewed their subscriptions. They simply forgot to send the ten cents. But we mail this number to such under a one cent stamp and mark a red ink cross on the margin opposite this statement as a further reminder. Failing to hear from them we shall be obliged to part company after this issue. Don't drop out, friends, for such a small matter as ten cents. We have several numbers planned for—all interesting and important.

CORNELIUS H. PATTON

Home Secretary of the American Board

THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

BY

Rev. Raymond Calkins, D. D.

One of the greatest hindrances to the cause of foreign missions in our Christian churches, is the absence of a deep-seated conviction of the universal necessity of our Christian faith. Deeper than all other causes, and more dangerous because more subtle and more easily overlooked, is the assumption widely cherished by many Christian people, forming a larger proportion of our Christian congregations than one often imagines, that the Christian faith is indeed preferable to all others, and even superior to all others; but is not therefore necessarily essential to the moral and spiritual welfare of all alien races or destined to be the universal faith of all mankind. As one of our own prophets has said: "It is a part of the confusion of thought in the churches at present, that there is a subtle doubt as to whether Christianity is a local or a universal religion—a question which involves its very nature."

No more important duty rests upon the Christian minister who desires to lead his people out into the broad understanding of the spirit of modern missions, and into the enlightened and devoted support of the world-wide missionary cause, than to seek sympathetically to enter into an understanding of the intellectual and moral difficulties which doubtless beset the presentation of Christianity as the universal faith, and to answer candidly and thoroughly the questions which such a claim raises in many thoughtful minds. Only upon the sure foundation of a clear, intellectual and profoundly spiritual apprehension of the universal nature of the Christian faith, can the vast edifice of modern missions safely rest.

The task is one of great delicacy and difficulty. For the questions, many of which are never uttered vocally or even definitely formulated, go to the root of things, and involve not only the nature of Christianity but the whole religious life of man as well. Why should all men have the same faith? How can all men think in the same way? If men have different temperaments, languages, customs, why should they not have differing religions? How do we know that the Christian faith is really fitted to the habits, the civilization, the temperament of all men? How can we assert that the truth as we know it is the whole truth? How do we know that the faiths of other races, though they contain less ideal elements than our own, still are not actually suited to their practical needs better than our own? Is not this business of uprooting and transplanting that which is so sacred, so indigenous to the soil, as the faiths of men, hallowed by the past, given both moral grandeur and spiritual power by untold centuries of endearing tradition, a dangerous if not an unholy undertaking? Such are some of the more popular ways of formulating this current doubt. The growing appreciation of non-Christian faiths; the growing recognition of the as yet unrevealed possibilities of human development; the increase of habits of thought and mind which make it difficult to harbor notions of finality and absoluteness, all tend to create even in the most Christian minds, feelings of intellectual embarrassment before the mighty affirmation of the universal nature of the Christian faith. Yet the prosperity of missions depends directly upon the depth and breadth of the utterance of just that conviction. The following paragraphs are designed as an outline merely of a possible approach to this whole subject; as a suggestion of some of the ways in which the conception of Christianity as the universal faith may be made increasingly intelligible to thoughtful minds.

A most helpful beginning to our inquiry is the re-discovery of the undoubted claim of Christianity itself to be the universal faith, and of Christ to be the universal Saviour. If we raise

the preliminary question of whether the assumption of historic Christianity to be the faith of all men is justified by the language of the New Testament, or by the words of Christ, there can be but one answer. The most searching criticism of the language of the Gospels and of the earliest expounders of the evangel of Christ, cannot expunge this element of its teaching. No more desperate undertaking can be imagined than the effort to remove from the Gospels every implication that their message was conceived and uttered in universal terms. Equally difficult would be the task presented by the Acts and the Epistles. What is the philosophy underlying the earliest Christian interpretation of history, but that "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together *until now*?" What is the New Testament thought about Christ but that He is the first-born of all creation before whom every knee shall bow? What is the meaning of the whole book of Hebrews, except that the partial sacrifice, the imperfect law, the temporary priesthood find their eternal fulfillment in Him who is "the same, yesterday, today, and forever?" There is not a book in the New Testament which does not have the truth of Christ as the universal Saviour woven into its very fabric.

Evidently there is no escape from our problem by this door. The language alike of Christ and of His Apostles authenticate its message to be received of every man, or invalidate its acceptance by any man. One cannot, that is, accept the New Testament for himself, and reject it for others. One cannot take the Gospel into his own heart, and at the same time take out the very heart of that Gospel. One cannot at the same time say the Gospel is true, and deny the innermost truth of that very Gospel. The dilemma needs to be pressed home. Let one satisfy oneself that the religion of the New Testament is nothing less than a universal faith, and the reverent, sincere and thoughtful mind, unable to surrender or to resist the grip of that faith upon itself, will look for ways in which it may perceive it to be the "good news which shall be to all the people."

In search for some aid which shall make the conception of a universal religion to be at least antecedently possible, one finds oneself pausing before the question of the real constitution of our human nature. Are men fundamentally alike, or are they fundamentally different? Plainly the truth of Christianity as the universal faith depends upon our answer. Let men fundamentally differ in their needs, desires, aspirations, hopes, longings, sorrows, joys, fears, affections; let them differ in all that goes to make up that essential life which all men live beneath its outer accidents of sky and soil, and the claim of Christianity be the faith of all men falls immediately and inevitably to the ground. Then varieties not only of religious experience, but of religion itself would be eternally necessary, just because there would be eternal varieties of men. One faith would not answer for all men, because there would be more than one man. One prayer would not answer all cries, because those cries would be for differing gifts.

But is it true that humanity differs at its centre, just as it is true that humanity differs at its circumference? Or is it rather true that the deeper one penetrates into the heart of humanity, the less one is made aware of cross currents of life and feeling, the more one is made to feel that the life of men everywhere is really flowing in the same direction. The question thus put really answers itself. "It is impossible," a great scientist has written, "to mistake or misapprehend the multiplied proofs of the unity of the human species." And the unity of man which today is 'the instinctive presupposition of all civilized men,' finds its deepest illustration in the sphere of religion. It is Max Mueller who declared that the source of all religions had been the same, "The dim perception through the partial life we all live, of the Infinite; the yearning of the soul after God. *At this deepest moment of their life, all men clasp hands and are brothers.*"

"All men are brothers." There is the fundamental basis of a universal faith. And it is a foundation which has been laid for us by

the best thought of our time. Here we are on firm ground. The truth that men are brothers is held today as it was never held before. It has been made the basis of a new science, a new history, a new politics. It must be made the basis of a renewed faith in Christianity as the religion of the world. "At this deepest moment, all men clasp hands and are brothers." Together they share the joys and sorrows, hopes and fears that proceed from the central passion to know God and to enjoy Him forever. "In Him, all men are one." And if man is one, then his faith may well be one. It is possible, that is, to quote Dr. Hall's impressive words, "To conceive of a religion that is local, tribal, a national cult that springs from the soil of a race, endeared by neighborhood sentiments, meeting the needs of those living in their limits, and yet lacking the universal note, incapable of meeting other needs. But it is equally possible to conceive of a faith that appeals to all human life at levels that lie beneath tribal and national distinctions, that might be translated into the multitudinous tongues of the earth and yet ever utter itself in the one veracular of the soil, which should gather up into itself not the dispensable accidents, but the indispensable elements of the religious life of man." The fundamental difficulty of a belief in Christianity as the world's religion has been removed.

But other questions remain. For there is a moral, as well as an intellectual difficulty in the conception of a world faith. In their effort to view Christianity as the world's final faith, men experience the same kind of moral embarrassment which they feel in the claim of any system or institution to have a monopoly of truth. Men always miss in such a claim a certain sense of proportion, a sense of deference and of humility which they feel is characteristic of truth in its highest and best forms. The question which now confronts them is not the theoretical possibility of a world faith, but the moral right of any one faith to lay claim to be such. Is there not an unwarranted assumption in such a claim which in itself is sign of moral inferior-

ity? In the claim of Christianity to be the only true and final faith, is there not something which in itself is un-Christian? Thus the Christian claim and the moral sense seem to come into conflict.

Without doubt we touch here a difficulty both serious and wide-spread. That view of Christianity which regards it as one of the world's faiths, but not necessarily as its one faith, seems to be buttressed by the highest moral sanctions, seems to be less arrogant, more humane and just than to acclaim it to be the universal faith. Unless this feeling can be tempered, unless in some way the moral sense can be brought into harmony with, to the support of, the truth of Christianity as the world's Gospel, Christian missions in their broadest significance, and in their deepest intention will not receive the moral assent and devotion of many thoughtful minds.

It is one of the distinctions, perhaps the chief distinction, of modern missions that this reconciliation has been, or at least is being, brought about. To have pointed out the way to a complete synthesis between the Christian claim and the moral sense is perhaps the crowning achievement of the great missionaries of our present generation. If the Christian teachers at home will carefully study the attitude which Christianity is actually assuming today in the face of the non-Christian faiths; if he will observe the spirit of its representatives abroad, he will find visualized that union of the whole truth of Christianity and the sentiments of justice and of brotherhood, which many have thought to be impossible.

From three separate directions the light has broken. In the first place, it has been made plain that Christianity neither claims or desires "a monopoly of revealed truth." If the claim to be the final faith of the world carried with it the idea of monopoly, there are few of us that could harbor it with sympathy. In reality, precisely the opposite is true. One has only to remind himself, for example, of the attitude of Jesus toward that ancient religion in which He Himself was born and bred. The attitude

of superiority in undeniable. That He regarded the Gospel which He had come to declare as completing and fulfilling the ancient law, rests upon the surface of His teaching. It was precisely this note of final authority which made the people wonder. Yet combined with this uncompromising attitude of authority, is the unmistakable note of appreciation, and of sympathy and even of dependence. Jesus drew constantly upon the wealth of Old Testament thought for the expression of His own Evangel. Not only He made no attempt to conceal, rather He was eager to point out all foreshadowings of His Gospel to be found in law and in prophet.

Such is the Christian attitude today toward the faiths of the non-Christian world; an attitude which combines the idea of authority with that of perfect appreciation and sympathy; which looks upon itself not as a destroyer, but as a fulfiller of the ancient faiths of men. Here lay the great service, the final contribution to the cause of missions of Charles Cuthbert Hall. The sense of loss in his untimely death is tempered by the sense of the permanent value of his work which, in a sense, he had achieved. He had proved, that is, the entire possibility of a complete union of the ideas of authority and brotherhood in the sphere of religious thought and experience. Lecturing before educated Hindus, no one of whom was an adherent of the Christian religion, he yet abated not one jot or tittle of its claim to be the universal and the final faith. "The Christian idea of the incarnation of Jesus Christ must be understood to connote far more than the advent of one of the world's great religious leaders. The Christian religion is not the beautiful story of one who was the fairest of the children of men. That religion is built upon deeper foundations than admiring love for the ideally beautiful leader. It is built upon the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the manifestation of the Eternal Essence, under forms of time, and in terms of human life." Yet with this note of authority was combined, as we all know, the most exquisite note of appreciation

of and sympathy with the non-Christian religions. "Not a word," a hearer has told us, "escaped his lips consciously derogatory of other religions. In listening to him, one felt that the time had come to revise Kipling and to exclaim that 'East is West, and West is East, and the twain shall ever meet,' " "I have not for a moment held the attitude of aggression as one who coming from the West, would impose the opinions of his own sect on men of another tradition and of another training. I offer you reasons for regarding Christianity as the absolute religion but not in the spirit of bigotry but in spirit of brotherhood as befitting those who have a common solicitude for the well-being of the world. The Christian religion above all rejoices that all men everywhere have a spiritual nature capable of receiving communications from God, that the one God who loves all men alike is everywhere working upon human spirits for good, that all the spiritual experience of the race is contributory to the one final end of revelation, the free knowledge of the presence and character of God."

This union of authority and sympathy, of finality and brotherhood is one of the most evident characteristics of the spirit of modern missions. In it, we find a beautiful illustration of the truth which lies just far enough beneath the surface not to be at once evident, that the truest sympathy is always joined with the deepest conviction; that the ideas of authority and of brotherhood, far from being essentially antagonistic, in reality need one another, each to the preservation of itself. Real tolerance, as Phillips Brooks has reminded us, consists in the love of truth and the love of man, each brought to its own perfection. Without the love of man, the love of truth tends to become hard and cruel. But it is also true that the love of man, without the love of truth tends to become thin and weak. It is he who is most deeply impressed with the finality of the faith as it is in Jesus, who is also most deeply impressed with the religious capacity of all men and with the dignity and significance of every form of faith; for the deeper one penetrates

into the heart of Christ, the more roomy and capacious he discovers that heart to be. The missionary who has been most impressed with the uniqueness and imperativeness of the Gospel, has always been the world's most catholic leader. It was because Saint Paul received Christ as the first-born of all creation that he was enabled to say to the Athenians, "Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you." No pen could exalt Jesus above that of Saint Augustine, and just because he set Christ on the throne, he was in a position to say that the whole world had really been Christian from the creation. No one could hold more firmly than David Livingstone to the essential truth of Christ's Saviourhood for all the world. Therefore when they came to bury him, they could find no better words to set on his monument than those most tender words of our Lord: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

A similar help which comes to our aid from modern missions to the solution of the moral problem involved in the conception of Christianity as the world's faith, is the direct relation of Christianity, as set forth by its modern representatives, towards the other ancient faiths of men. One can hardly describe this attitude better than in the words of George Matheson in a work of his too little known and read, "The Distinctive Messages of the Old Religions." According to the Christian conception, he writes, "The other faiths are not false faiths. They are not dead faiths, they are preserved inviolable as parts of the Christian faith. Christianity claims to be the 'manifest wisdom of God.' In this ascription she has been candid to the past. She has not denied its wisdom, she has only aspired to enfold it. She has not sought to derogate from the doctrines of authority, she has only sought to reconcile their antagonisms, to supply their defects" — to bring together all the diverse, differing, opposite and as it seems opposing aspects of other faiths and unite them in one simple and all-embracing truth. "She seeks to

be a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven, each of whose ascending steps shall find a place for one of the systems of the past. Instead of being manifested to reveal the falsity of their views, she must for the first time, vindicate the truth of all—must discover a point in which beliefs hitherto deemed at variance may lie down together in unity, and receive from the heart of man a common justification.”

That is Saint Paul’s claim for Christ when he said it pleased the Father to cause such fullness to dwell in Him that things that seemed at variance, in Him were reconciled. And no one can view the history of the Christian faith without perceiving that it has steadily performed this mission of reconciliation. It has accepted, that is, found a place within itself, for the truth of every other faith, and then in turn, has given that faith what it lacked; accepting its truth and supplying its need. Christianity, as Matheson points out, received from Egypt its powerful and beautiful realism;—it gave to Egypt what it lacked, a deep, spiritual and intellectual apprehension of the relation of God to man as set forth in Origen, Tertullian and the whole Christian school at Alexandria. It received from Greece its intellectual breadth and philosophic depth; but it gave to Greece that which it sorely needed, a rigorous morality. It received from Rome its law; it gave to Rome its love. It received from the Teutons their love of freedom; it gave to the Germans the love of humility. In Him, in the fullness of Christ and of the Christian spirit, these opposing elements have been reconciled. And in the union of these opposites the universalism of Christianity has steadily appeared.

Such is the relation in which Christianity stands today toward the non-Christian faiths. Its object is not to supplant them, but to supplement them. It recognizes, for example, the vast contribution which Confucianism has made toward the well-being of China, in teaching the sanctity of the secular life, the truth and beauty of virtue, the dignity of labor, the practice of morality. It gladly recognizes the fruits of this teaching in certain elements of Chinese

character: its patient self-control, its tireless capacity for continuous labor, its frugality and absence of personal indulgence, its integrity, and its respect for age and for kindred. Thus Christianity approaches this civilization with entire recognition of the worth of its great teacher, and of the results of his message. It recognizes, however, that that message is a part of its own; that frugality, reverence, toil, and the holiness of daily life and of the family relation are even more a part of the teaching of Jesus than of Confucius. And it sees something more: it sees that the great need of China is that its gospel of the secular life be supplemented by Christ's Gospel of the Life that is eternal. In the teaching of Confucius there is plenty of time, but no eternity; much of the finite, but no infinite; a magnificent conception of the secular, but no suggestion of the spiritual. It is at this point that Christ is prepared to take China by the hand; to teach it that no one can pass through the ordeal of the commonplace unless he sees something out of the common; that no one can fully labor without perceiving a vision beyond the labor; that no one can bear his poverty of spirit unless he have a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven. Such is the message which the heralds of Christ are bringing. And the whole awakening of China may be described as her response to that message. She is perceiving a sky above her earth, a horizon beyond her sight, a star that gleams not behind but before. Taught by Christ, she is adding to the secular, the spiritual; to the past, the future; to the trivial, the eternal.*

In the relation of Christianity to the great religions of India, we see this process just reversed. For the message of Brahminism is just the opposite of that of Confucius. If he taught the sanctity of the secular, Brahmanism teaches the reality of the spiritual. If Confucius taught his disciples to look at nothing but the material, Brahmanism has taught its followers to regard nothing but the fact of the eternal. To the Brahman, the world is but a

*See Matheson, Introduction to "Portrait of Christ."

dream. To the Brahman, behind the dream there is the dreamer. And the dreamer, that art Thou. And the good man of Brahmanism is the man who looks upon this world as an illusion and learns to know that Brahma, He is all.

Now in the approach of Christianity to India, there is entire recognition of the beauty, the dignity, the everlasting worth of her lofty teaching; but there is also recognition of the other truth needed to match and complete it. Christianity sees in the mysticisms of India that which is part of her own message to the world. Indeed the New Testament vies with Hindu philosophy in its teaching concerning the oneness of God and man. There is no saying in any sacred book of the East to surpass the word of Jesus, "That they may be one as we are one, I in them, and Thou in me;" or the words of Saint Paul, himself one of the greatest of the mystics, "In Him we live and move and have our being, — for He is over all and through all and in all." The Christian sings no less than the Hindu, "Lord of all being, throned afar, yet to each loving heart how near," "Till in the ocean of thy love we lose ourselves in Heaven above," "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean and the living air."

But Christ matches transcendentalism with the daily round, the trivial task; to the infinite He binds the finite, with the spiritual He links the actual, with the vision He unites the duty. Not ecstasy alone, He teaches, but labor, not contemplation, but warfare, not ease but suffering, not a crown but a cross, shall open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to *walk*, as He walked."

And this is the message for which India waits. The great need of India today, is a sense of sin. It has transcendentalism, it needs morals. It has mysticism, it needs ethics. It has a perception of God apart from the world, it needs to do the will of God *in* the world. To its Rig-veda it needs to join the Ten Commandments; to its Upanishads it needs to add the

Sermon on the Mount. Let India become Christian, and she will not lose what has been her distinction; she will gain that the absence of which has been her shame. Put the Cross of Cavalry in the midst of India, join earth to Heaven, clasp man to God and to her fellowmen, and what a Gospel that will be for India, and for the world. And Christianity, possessing in herself the truth to which India bears witness, offers India out of herself that truth for which she waits.

Such, then, is the relation of Christianity to the non-Christian faiths. Its finality, that is, is seen not in its monopoly of revealed truth, but in the way in which it gathers up within itself all the truths of other faiths, and completes them by adding the aspects and elements of truth which they lacked and failed to utter. For "It pleased the Father that in Him should all *fullness* dwell."

The third contribution of modern missions to the accommodation of the moral sense with the idea of a world-faith, is its insistence upon a differentiation between the essential and underlying truths of the Gospel, and its accidental and occidental ideas and forms. A great deal of the irritation which the subject of missions produces even in educated and supposedly enlightened men today, is due to the notion that the program of missions contemplates the entire transference from West to East, of the whole body of our theological thought, of our ecclesiastical systems and of our religious life, without any recognition of the difference between the temperament, the thought, the life of East and of West. Modern missions have taught us otherwise. Christian teachers at home are well aware that this notion is today a caricature of the real spirit of modern missions. Yet many a church attendant, many a college graduate who still withholds his gift from foreign missions is in bondage to this out-worn idea. He still needs to be taught that when we think of Christianity as the universal religion, it is not of the Christianity of our Western world that we are to think, not of Christianity as it has

been interpreted, defined or made familiar to ourselves, but rather of that essential Christianity embodied in the simplest words of Jesus, in His essential message to man, in the eternal Gospel of God's Being, Love, Forgiveness, Life which He came to reveal. He needs to be taught that Christian workers in foreign lands freely recognize that the essential truth as it in Christ may well have been overlaid in our Western world with ideas and forms corresponding to our political conditions, our ethical needs and our habits of thought and life,—ideas and forms which may be suitable for us, but may be equally foreign to the habits, thoughts, traditions of other peoples. He needs to understand that the ambition of the Christian worker on foreign soil, is not to reproduce the kind and outward form of Christian thought, or life in which he himself has been reared, and with which he may be most familiar; but rather to plant within the essential heart of God's children everywhere the simple message of God's love and pardon through Jesus Christ our Lord. He needs to be shown that Christian workers abroad, this seed once planted, are quite willing to have it produce a thought, a life, a system suited to the soil and habits of those in whom it has sprung up, however much these may differ from the forms and systems of the West. He needs to be told that foreign missions instead of narrowing our conception of the Gospel has been the chief agency of the Church in enlarging it; that it is precisely the foreign missionary who has taught us, not we him, that the only Gospel which the world needs, the only Gospel that we have the right to offer, is not the Christianity of our modern West, but the simple, eternal and unchanging message of God to man in Christ our Lord. Let men once learn to link the cause of missions and the perception and annunciation of such a truth, and the same moral sense which caused them to stand aloof from the missionary cause will cause them to become its intelligent and devoted friends.

Such, then are the ways in which modern missions have taught us to reconcile in the minds

of men the idea of Christianity as the faith of the world, with the broadest sentiments of justice and of brotherhood. Let these facts, eloquent in meaning, and unlimited in their spiritual influence even upon those of us to whom they are most familiar, be continuously made known, and the moral doubt concerning Christianity as the universal faith—a doubt due to mistaken apprehensions of what that belief really implies, must gradually dissolve and disappear.

With this task, the hardest part of the Christian teacher's duty has been accomplished. When once the obstacles have been removed which blocked their entrance to the mind, the reasons for regarding Christianity as the one faith suited to the needs of all men everywhere, become overwhelming in their appeal. The only reason why they have not carried before, is that the mind has not been ready to receive them. Therefore it is a mistake to begin and to end one's plea for missions with the familiar arguments for the supremacy of Christianity. That is why the larger portion of these paragraphs has been given to the difficulties which block their approach. Let men understand that they can regard Christ as the universal Saviour, without doing violence either to their mental integrity or to their innate sense of justice, and He stands at once before them in the glory of His apparel, mighty to save.

Three great unanswerable propositions demonstrate to the satisfaction of all thoughtful men the claim of Christianity to be the universal faith. First, the finality of Christ's Person, and the cosmopolitanism of His appeal. Second, the uniqueness of the dynamic of His life and of His spirit. Third, the correspondence between the ruling ideas of Christianity, and the ruling needs of men.

The one essential thing about the Gospel of Christ is the Person of Christ. This familiar truth helps one forward immensely in his un-

derstanding of Christianity as the universal faith. For personality is the only final thing in the world in which we live. Time cannot touch it. Distance cannot alter it. Age cannot disintegrate it. Progress cannot leave it behind. The one final and universal fact, and the only one is personality. And the Christian faith is inseparably bound to a Person. He is the only fact to which it is bound. Therefore, if He be the universal Person, it alone can be the universal faith. Now the real distinction of the character of Christ is the absence of all distinctiveness. Its most evident characteristic is its aloofness from any special type of character. By no effort of the imagination can He be confined within one plot of ground, one moment of time, one race of men. He escapes by the very nature of His being from the ordinary limitations of time and space. "The local, the temporary, the accidental fade out of sight, as we look at Him, and there shine out the lineaments of the universal and eternal."

Equally striking is the cosmopolitanism of His appeal. The breadth of any one's character may be determined by observing how many of the circles of human society it penetrates, how many of the variously organized and temperamentally differing groups of men it reaches by its influence and is able to speak to in intelligible terms. The greatest minds the world has known have recognized these limitations and have been content to move within them. With Christ alone there appears to be no class, no condition in the complex and multiform life of men in which He does not serenely move. He exercises upon all alike His unfailing influence. It was so in His own day, and when His apostles taught the multitudes in His spirit, we read that *every* man heard them speak, as it were, in his own language. And the cosmopolitan appeal of Jesus in His day has been reproduced ever since in the same manifestation of elemental and universal attractiveness. Neither land nor race, neither color nor creed, neither temperament nor training seem to have anything to do with the appeal which Christ makes to the world. The heart has yet to be

found to which He cannot find an entrance. This may confidently be said of Him, and of Him alone. Corresponding to the possibility that is, of a universal faith, there would seem to be the beginning of one, however incomplete and unfulfilled.

The second of the great demonstrations of the finality of Christ is the incomparable dynamic of His person. For more power, and not more knowledge, is the greatest need of men. And the ultimate gift, the real contribution of Christ to the world, is the gift of moral power. "I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly." It is, therefore, at the point of view of power, and not of precept, that the final comparison of Christianity with other faiths must be made. That is what Saint Peter meant when he declared "There is no other name whereby we may be *saved*." In other words, he places his claim for the supremacy of Christ as the ground of what He can do for human character. Two thousand years have passed since that claim was made. And recently it was re-uttered in modern phraseology. "From the point of view of power," Professor Harnack is reported to have said, "there is no such thing as comparative religion." You may compare religions, that is, in other histories, the contents of their sacred writings, but when you come to the test of power, to moral initiative and control to ethical dynamic and uplift, to ability to touch, awaken and inspire the native springs of character and action—when you come, that is, to the deepest needs of men and thus to the severest test of a faith to meet those needs,—at this point the preeminence of one of those faiths, of Christianity, is such that comparison with it becomes impossible. "From the point of view of power, there is no such thing as comparative religion." In this judgment all unbiased men, Christian and non-Christian may be said to agree. Science has demonstrated it to be true; that the lever that will lift a beast, whether of appetite or of selfishness, into a man, must rest upon a higher fulcrum than man himself can reach. Expe-

rience has proved it to be true, that in all this universe of things no such moral dynamic can be found as centres in the story of the life and death of Jesus, and in the mighty working of His spirit. History proves it to be true, for the more the other faiths are studied, the more there comes to light not only their beauty, but also their lack. They cease to satisfy, at the very point where Christianity begins. "They contain no central personality morally adequate to deal with the conscience, the heart and the will." The finality of Christ appears in the age-long demonstration of His power alone to trouble the conscience, to soften the heart and to resuscitate the wounded wills of men. He is supreme in the supreme affair in all this universe of God. "There is none other by whom we may be saved."

The final demonstration of the universality of the Christian faith lies within the province of the psychology of religion. It is found in the analysis of man's religious nature, and in the correspondence between its demands and the ruling ideas of the Christian faith. No portion of the lectures of the late Charles Carroll Everett on the Content of the Christian faith were more impressive to those who heard them than those which pointed out how the ultimate ideas of the reason — the ideas of unity, of goodness, of beauty, found their fulfillment in the Christian revelation alone. Christianity alone answers to the intellectual demands of men by its doctrines of God's Fatherhood. Until men can say 'I believe in God the Father Almighty, they can know no mental rest. And only as they learn to add the words 'And in Jesus Christ His Son,' can they truly repeat the words on which their happiness depends. Christianity alone answers to the moral needs of men; alone it supplies them with an adequate moral ideal; alone it creates a faith in their own moral possibilities; alone it produces an adequate sense of sin; alone it offers a Saviour to the sinner. Christianity alone answers to the social needs of men, for alone it begets a sufficient sense of brotherhood, alone it sets in motion the

springs of social action. Only where Christ is known do men call God their common Father. Only where men call God their Father can they call each other brothers. Only where Christ is known, does the malaria of suspiciousness and of hopelessness so characteristic of the non-Christian civilizations, vanish before the Life-giver, who ushers in the will to live, and the joy in living.—Christianity alone answers to the spiritual needs of men. For alone it tells them of the love of God, in ways and terms that men can understand; alone it answers to the demand of the heart for immortality.

Such, in briefest outline, are the ultimate grounds for belief in Christianity as the faith of the world; for believing that as men come more and more to themselves, they will draw nearer and nearer to Him, for a conviction that if He be but lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself. The point to be reiterated and constantly to be remembered is, that upon the reality and depth of this conviction depends the vigor and out-reaching power of the missionary program of the Christian church; that it was because of their passionate conviction that Jesus was the destined Saviour of men, that the early church covered the then known world with the good news of His redemption; that there is no other force, no lesser motive that shall carry the Cross today to the ends of the earth. The prime necessity is that Christian teachers everywhere should perceive this; that they should themselves be mastered by an intelligent and passionate persuasion in the universal Saviourhood of our Redeemer; that they should seek, in the sympathetic perception of the difficulties which hide that vision from other men's eyes, to exalt Him as the Saviour of the world. For only as Christ is enthroned in the hearts of His own, shall men of all nations bow before that throne and worship Him.

Conditional Gifts.

Some of our readers may be inclined to consider making a gift to the Board through our "Conditional Gift Fund." This plan has commended itself to so many that scarcely a week goes by when we do not receive some such offer. The fund now amounts to over \$600,000. This plan enables one to give during life and yet have the benefit of a needed income, without any of the responsibility and care incident to the investment and management of funds. We shall be glad to send a full description of this plan to any who may inquire of us. All correspondence as to legacies or conditional gifts should be with Frank H. Wiggin, Treasurer, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Forms of Bequests.

Form for a Specific Bequest. I give and bequeath unto the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," incorporated in Massachusetts in 1812, the sum of dollars. to be expended for the appropriate objects of said corporation.

Form of Devise (Real Estate). I give and devise unto the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," incorporated in Massachusetts in 1812, all that real estate (here insert description), with the appurtenances in fee simple, for the use, benefit and behoof of said Society forever.

Form of a Residuary Clause. All the rest, residue and remainder of my real and personal estate, I devise and bequeath unto the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," incorporated in Massachusetts in 1812.

Codicils. If the Board is remembered in a codicil, care should be taken that proper legal forms are used, and that the codicil is dated and signed, and also witnessed by three witnesses.

FROM SEPTEMBER TO JUNE

the American Board sent out sets of

Stereopticon Views

with lectures on its missions

598 Times

These are some of the reports they have brought back:

From a Vermont country town:

"Strange to say these missionary pictures have brought people to church who have not been inside such a place for years. I cannot refrain from again commending this happy conception of the Board."

From a Massachusetts city:

"You have certainly rendered the churches a splendid service by providing these fine and inspiring sets of pictures."

From a Connecticut village:

"A simple announcement at the morning service filled the chapel each of the three Sunday evenings. I find that foreign missionary instruction in a church arouses it wonderfully to the realization of its own nature and local opportunity."

These sets of pictures and the accompanying descriptive lectures are being constantly revised and brought up to date. Many of the pictures have been made and colored abroad; they are both accurate and artistic.

The list now includes forty sets, covering all the Board's missions and the several departments of its work. The slides will serve equally well to illustrate an original address if preferred.

They are loaned to Congregational churches without expense, save for expressage and breakage, and can be obtained from the Boston office or from one of the District Secretaries, according to location. Write to JOHN G. HOSMER, Agent, Room 102, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.; or to the District Secretaries, as follows: Rev. Charles C. Creegan, D. D., Fourth Avenue and 22d Street, New York; Rev. A. N. Hitchcock, D. D., 153 La Salle Street, Chicago, Ill.; Rev. H. Melville Tenney, D. D., Barker Block, Berkeley, Cal.

Have you seen them? Have you used them?

Why not try something new this fall?

American Board Publications

Missionary Herald

Published monthly. Contains latest information from all our missions. 75 cents per year. In clubs of ten or more, 50 cents each. This organ of the Board was never more prized by its readers than now, and it is essential for those who would keep informed in regard to the work of our Foreign Missions and the great religious movements in non-Christian lands.

Congregational Work

Published ten times a year by the Congregational Benevolent Societies. Subscription, 10 cents. A compact, comprehensive and interesting setting forth of all Congregational missionary work abroad and at home.

Envelope Series

A quarterly issued by the Home Department of the Board, in which we present some of our most important articles. Subscription, 10 cents a year.

News Bulletin

Issued by the Home Department from time to time, and invaluable as a brief, newsy synopsis of the leading current events in the missionary world. Furnished free upon payment of postage. A new number just out containing news items of great interest.

The Medical Missionary

A new pamphlet by Sec. James L. Barton. Beautifully printed and profusely illustrated. The contents are extraordinarily interesting—a revelation to those who have not read of our hospital work. This pamphlet affords one of the best ways of interesting people in foreign missions. Price, 15 cents.

Literature and leaflets of the American Board may be had by addressing:

JOHN G. HOSMER, Congregational House, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Or at the offices of the District Secretaries:

REV. C. C. CREEGAN, D. D., 4th Avenue and 22d Street, New York City.

REV. A. N. HITCHCOCK, Ph. D., 153 La Salle Street, Chicago, Ill.

REV. H. MELVILLE TENNEY, Barker Block, Berkeley, Cal.